

Knowledge Acquisition according to Individual Needs – KAIN

The successfully tested and implemented methodological framework (training method) KAIN

- creates a common knowledge base for participants with different backgrounds in training and consulting processes,
- takes particular account of the individual experience of participants,
- shows possibilities to change/improve the situation of the participants on site for the pursuit of project goals and change measures,
- sharpens the knowledge of possible needs for change, and
- enables those involved participants to design the right measures and implement them correctly.

KAIN describes the tasks of trainers/consultants to accompany (e.g. organizational, structural) workplace innovations and to enable people from companies to carry out change processes as independently as possible under the supervision of external consultants.

The consulting process is composed of three phases:

1. classroom teaching
2. self-study with external support
3. report and reflection.

The overall aim of the training is to ensure that all participants have sufficient information and knowledge on how the basic training idea can be implemented and pursued under the individual (quite different) framework conditions on site. Hopefully they will gain confidence in the feasibility of change processes.

Tasks of the trainers/consultants: Knowledge transfer and enabling persons on

- management of participative change processes,
- exploring the need for change,
- assessment of the need (importance) and the possibilities for action (possibility, feasibility, practicability),
- formulation of change targets and conception of change measures.

Part 1: Classroom Teaching

(duration approx. 1.5 – 2 days)

Goals and tasks:

- knowledge transfer about the KAIN-method, embedded in the contents of HR-policy and workplace innovation
- creation of a common basis among the project participants by teaching essential knowledge for the management of change processes and employee participation
- exchange of experience about successful projects for work design and exploration of beneficial and hindering influencing factors
- first/preliminary orientation on topics for a change process in the own company.

The core of this training module consists of a 1.5 to 2-days workshop in which the participants get to know (usually science-based) models and instruments from project-related research for structuring and solving problems and learn to apply them (mentally). This is intended to create a common conceptual basis for the further procedure in the training.

The models and instruments presented (as design recommendations for practical use) ideally form a common framework in which, in particular, the existing experiences of the participants are to be integrated in order to pursue the training objectives. The experiences of the participants should serve to supplement or modify the proposals for structuring and solving problems given by the research.

Thus, at an early stage of the training, a necessary (mental) adaptation of the proposed models and instruments to the individual needs and characteristics of the participants on site (usually with different framework conditions) should take place.

Tasks of the trainers/consultants:

This consideration of the individual needs and particularities of the participants on site in a face-to face training requires a high degree of knowledge and experience with the use of interactive and participant-centered didactic methods on the part of the trainers.

A further focus of the first part of the training is to introduce the participants with the planning, implementation and also (critical) evaluation of their own project, which is to be dealt with in the second part of the training. Thus, another central goal of this part of the training is to give the participants important impulses for the implementation of the presented models and instruments in their own project. The application and implementation of the presented models and instruments by the participants "at home" is, so to speak, the focus of the second part of the training concept.

Part 2: Self-study in own company/organization with the support of trainers

(duration approx. 12 – 18 weeks)

Goals and tasks:

- Accompaniment and support of change processes in enterprises, from the formulation of objectives, description of measures, conception of implementation to impact analysis by training and process-oriented, if necessary also technical consulting
- application and transfer of knowledge into the individual practice of the participants on site

In the second part, the participants have the task of applying the knowledge acquired in the first part and the knowledge of how to shape their own practice in the sense of the training idea in their companies/organizations. For a sustainable (learning) effect it is necessary that they plan, implement, evaluate, critically reflect and document their own project or activities to improve a situation on site under their individual framework conditions in the "here and now".

This phase with the duration of approx. 12 – 18-weeks is accompanied and supported by professional advice and support from the trainers/consultants. In principle, the participants should apply and implement the knowledge they have acquired in Part 1 themselves. As a rule, however, advice and support are often required in order to apply the process of adapting the knowledge acquired in Part 1 of the training appropriately under the real conditions on site and to lead one's own project to success.

Tasks of the trainers/consultants:

The support of the trainers can range from a rather simple general consultation in the sense of passing on relevant information to an intensive accompaniment in the sense of coaching. In individual cases, it is usually necessary to consider what kind of support is needed to enable the individual participant to pursue his or her individual project goals.

In this phase it is quite possible and not uncommon that when applying the models and instruments presented in phase 1 in practice, the individual project proceeds differently than initially thought and planned by the participant. Even in such situations, the trainers of the project team can provide valuable support in pursuing the "actual" project goals.

This second part of the training enables in particular the very welcome didactic aspect of working on concrete improvements in one's own company / at one's own workplace, which is associated with a high motivation to learn. In this learning process, the company management and other employees are usually intensively involved in what is actually done at the workplace, thus achieving joint learning and strong multiplication effects in the training.

Further advantages are that what has been learnt is directly implemented in everyday business life, that the innovations associated with project work are in the interest of company's management, quickly become visible and motivate managers to promote further training for the workforce and to use it as a strategic instrument of company management. It also responds to the particular needs of small and medium-sized enterprises, which are constantly suffering from a lack of time as the biggest obstacle to training. The KAIN Training Method generally almost completely eliminates absenteeism.

Part 3: Individual project presentation and reflection

(duration approx. 1.5 – 2 days)

Goals and tasks:

- reflection (evaluation) about the success in the dimensions of individual, operational and structural changes and change processes
- identify supportive and obstructive conditions of change processes and
- derivation of “lessons learned” for further change processes

In the third part of the training, the experiences gained and the insights gained will be presented and exchanged at a joint event, with the participants presenting and discussing their individual projects. Both the participants and the trainers have the particular task of reviewing the projects and reflecting on whether or respectively what contribution they make to the sustainable pursuit of the overarching training idea to strengthen the capacity and ability for HR-policy and workplace innovation. The exchange between the participants can provide them with very valuable impulses on how to make their own project even more successful. In this context, an important goal can also be to show which major obstacles are responsible for "not-yet-success" in order to work on this in the future.

Tasks of the trainers/consultants:

- enable constructive exchange between the participants,
- focus on the common basis for the pursuit of (general) training objectives, and
- moderate an instructional discussion on the identification of supportive and obstructive conditions of change processes and present contributions for a possible reduction of resistance in the tracking of individual projects.

Instructions for trainers/consultants on planning and using KAIN

The selection of companies/persons for the training and consultations depends on the interests of the companies. In an active approach, a pre-selection can be made on the basis of individual criteria, e.g. sector, company size, state of technology use, quality of personnel policy, innovation orientation, ..., i.e./with other words the maturity level of the organization.

The size of the group should not exceed more than eight and not be less than three or four companies. Enterprises may be allowed to send more than one person (project group). The total group should not exceed more than twelve persons.

The persons from the companies should have the right to make decisions or have a say in their organizations in order to be able to decisively advance the pursuit of their individual projects.

The participants should decide at the end of part 1 to carry on with parts 2 and 3. Otherwise resources will be wasted. If there is a fear that problems will arise in part 2, it will be better to do a small project for testing rather than too many or too large projects. And: Even from failed projects something can be learned.

The companies can exchange their ideas and experiences during the development phase, e.g. develop measures together.

Requirements for trainers/consultants

At various points in the brief description of the training method it became clear that the trainers have a special role to play in the use of this method, which is underlined here again.

In general the trainers/consultants should have experience in presenting content and using interactive methods to design training.

Against the background of an overview knowledge covering all relevant subject areas the trainers are not only representatives for a variety of project topics and contents, but also –from a didactic-methodical point of view – moderators, learning (process) facilitators, coaches, sometimes co-managers, consultants, and even learners.

In individual cases, they must also decide in what form the involvement of experts and specialists on a (detailed) topic is necessary for highly specialized topics. This requires a good network.

A special challenge for the trainers is when they are in the role of a coach, who may also have to provide individual support for the learning processes of individual participants in the pursuit of a project on site.